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THE  
WORLD  
AND  
ITS  
GOD

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ATTORNEY - AT - LAW

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# THE WORLD AND ITS GOD.

BY

PHILIP MAURO,

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“The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?” (Jer. viii. 9.)

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

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The Author of this volume, a prominent and shrewd American lawyer, was for upwards of twenty years a convinced and avowed materialist. His mental and professional training, therefore, lends lucidity and force to his arguments, which will appeal the more readily to honest minds and sincere seekers of the truth.



## P R E F A C E .

The purpose of this volume is to make an application of the philosophic or rationalistic test to the Bible account of Creation, and particularly to that portion of the account which deals with the Origin of Evil in human nature.

There is room just now for an application of this test, because of the collapse of the Darwinian theory of the Origin of Species. That theory, which was the central doctrine of the philosophy of Materialism, had so completely occupied the stage, that its exit leaves a most conspicuous vacancy. If evil (in its infinite variety of manifestations) be not a primal condition out of which man is evolving, and which the human race is gradually leaving behind, as Materialism taught, what is it? If we reject Materialism, as the successors of its now deceased apostles are doing, what shall take its place?

Here are patent facts—the most conspicuous matters of daily observation—viz., the distressing facts of human delinquencies and sufferings. It is not endurable that we should have no explanation of them; and Materialism, while it lasted, sufficed at best to prevent a painful void. In what direction then shall we turn to find a resting-place for our inquiring minds? In such a period of transition there will be some minds (and possibly not a few) who will be disposed to examine again (or perhaps for the first time) the explanation given by the author of Genesis, and to ascertain whether that explanation accounts for the otherwise inexplicable facts of human experience and history. To these, the following lines will afford an opportunity of making such examination and will furnish assistance in conducting it to a sound conclusion.

Readers who are accustomed to philosophic discussions will find themselves in a familiar path so far as relates to the method employed herein; at the same time there is no attempt at profundity, and no arguments or reasonings are presented which the simple-minded and unphilosophic reader cannot readily grasp.

The volume is written from the present standpoint of one who, after having been for upwards of twenty years an implicit believer in the main doctrines of Materialism, has come to the unqualified acceptance of the first three chapters (and of all the other chapters) of Genesis, as a literal and accurate description of historic events.

The author has spoken of the passing of Materialism, and particularly of the collapse of the Darwinian theory as the striking present-day movement of philosophic thought. It is, indeed, common to hear those who fancy themselves to be talking learnedly speak of these things as if they were still, as they were a decade ago, the almost unquestioned teachings of "science." But these (many of them, sad to say, now occupants of pulpits in Christian churches) are but merely echoing in this generation the always unproved and now properly rejected speculations of a dead and gone generation of infidel philosophers.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PASSING OF MATERIALISM.

**T**HROUGH all generations philosophy has concerned itself with the questions: How did man come to be what he is? and, How did social conditions come to be what they are? These are not really two questions, but one; since the condition of the world finds its immediate explanation in human nature.

For thousands of years men have been observing minutely social conditions as they exist from time to time, and the changes from one set of conditions to another. A great mass of facts has been collected and many "laws of nature" have been ascertained or inferred; and upon all this fund of information philosophical minds have pondered, seeking the explanation of man and his world.

The latest and most ambitious attempt at the unification of human knowledge is that made

by Mr. Herbert Spencer. In the Spencerian view of the universe all changes and developments are, and always have been, controlled by a principle or law of Evolution. According to this supposed law, all developments proceed from the relatively simple and homogeneous to the relatively complex and heterogeneous. Entrusting ourselves to the guidance of this theory we are led backward in time to a condition of extreme simplicity, to a period wherein "eternal and indestructible matter" subsisted in a perfectly simple and undifferentiated condition, and wherein "eternal and indestructible" force had no manifestation, and no property but the impulse to evolve.

This philosophy gives no account of the origin of matter and force, nor does it assume to suggest how the principle of Evolution came into operation. It does not attempt to explain how or by what means the primal impulse to evolve was imparted to matter in its (supposed) primal condition of absolute simplicity and homogeneity. On the contrary, the Spencerian philosophy places the origin of matter, energy, and the primal evolutionary impulse in the region of the "unknowable." It admits the existence of a "First Cause,"

because the latter is necessary in order to complete the explanation. This "First Cause" is needed for the purpose of starting the universe, and of impressing upon it the primal evolutionary impulse; but thereafter it is dismissed, being *functus officio*, and no longer required for the explanation of phenomena. Lest there should be, on the part of students of this modern philosophy, any further inquiry regarding the "First Cause," that too is placed in the category of the "unknowable."

Spencerian philosophy thus sets itself forth as a finality. Except as to details it speaks the last words of man's wisdom, since it explains how everything, animate and inanimate, came to be what it is in consequence of gradual changes and of new and ever more complex—but purely spontaneous and fortuitous—groupings of the original atoms; and what it does not purport to explain it puts into the impenetrable region of the "unknowable."

It has been very properly objected that this philosophy is exceedingly unphilosophical in asserting that God (a name which many prefer to "First Cause") has *no power to make Himself known to man*, and that hence the use of the term "unknowable" is wholly

unwarranted. The use of this word is simply a presumptuous attempt to erect a barrier against all inquiry into what it most concerns man to know; and from this circumstance alone the truly wise may clearly perceive *the origin and purpose* of Spencerian philosophy. When once pointed out, it is obvious to the most unphilosophical mind that *God would not be God* if He had not the power to reveal to man so much of Himself, and of His purposes in creation, as the mind of man is capable of comprehending.

We can agree with the conclusions of Herbert Spencer and his school to this extent, that man cannot know anything of his own origin, of human nature with its strange contradictions, and of the existing world-system or organization, *unless it be directly revealed by the Creator.*

Upon this ground "thinkers" of all schools can stand, and their first division must be upon the question whether or not God *has* communicated with man and given to him a revelation; that is, upon the question—Is the Bible the Word of God?

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CLAIM OF THE BIBLE.

**I**T has seemed to the writer, after pondering sympathetically the Spencerian explanation of the universe, and after being constrained to recognise its inadequacy, that the Rationalistic method of testing a theory might be applied with helpful results to the Biblical explanation of phenomena. Within recent times the Biblical explanation of the creation of the universe, particularly of the earth and its inhabitants, as given in the first three chapters of Genesis, was rejected by nearly all men who made the slightest pretence to learning, upon the ground that it was in conflict with the supposed facts of natural science.

We do not propose to speak here of the profound change more recently wrought in the attitude of science, in consequence of the latest discoveries of geology and palæontology. It can now be asserted, upon the authority of the most eminent men of science, that not a single fact stands in contradiction to the



Creation story of Genesis.\* But the question which more nearly concerns us, and which we propose here to consider, is the great question which the philosophy grounded upon Materialism failed utterly to answer, namely: "How did man and the world come to be what they are?" We are concerned, therefore, not so much with Evolution in its comprehensive sense, as with the specific theory of the origin of the species of living creatures, including man, by a process of "natural selection" in the "struggle for existence."

The time is opportune for such a discussion, because one of the events which is transpiring in our day is the collapse of the Darwinian theory of the Origin of the Species. Let us dwell for a moment upon the most impressive fact and learn from it at least the utter instability of any system of philosophy which has its basis in human wisdom.

Never in the entire history of philosophy was a doctrine more widely accepted among the learned than the Darwinian theory of the

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\* For a concise and authoritative statement of the attitude of science to-day towards the creation story, we refer to that valuable booklet, "Roger's Reasons," by Dr. John Urquhart. (Marshall Bros.)

Origin of Species. Even doctors of theology and the occupants of Christian pulpits embraced it with real or feigned enthusiasm, and many of these went so far as to declare that it exalted the Creator and inculcated greater reverence for His methods in creation!

So enamoured of this new teaching were these sworn guardians of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" that they readily surrendered all parts of the Bible which seemed in any way in conflict with it. To accommodate this surrender to their consciences these compromisers invented the doctrine that "the Bible was not intended to teach science," but was to be accepted and believed only in so far as it related to spiritual and heavenly things; forgetting the words of Christ: "If I have told you *earthly* things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John iii. 12).

That this surrender to the immature and erroneous teachings put forth in the name of science should have had the effect of destroying the faith of many in the whole Scriptures was inevitable. If men be taught that they cannot believe what the Bible says regarding earthly things, how can it be expected that they will

believe what it says about heavenly things? Only a few years have passed since the time when, for a man to question the foundations of this doctrine of Evolution, was to avow himself a hopeless ignoramus touching the "settled results of science"; and yet to-day the philosophy of Materialism is fast becoming (if it be not so already) a mere historical phase of philosophic thought, to be classified and labelled and put on the shelf henceforth to be contemplated merely as a thing which men used to believe.

In the face of this fact how is it possible to conceive of any discoveries of science, or of any doctrine legitimately deduced therefrom, as contradicting the declarations of Scriptures concerning the creation of the universe by God, the disobedience of the first Adam and the consequent loss of eternal life by all his descendants, and the Divine provision of redemption by new birth into the last Adam? How can we fail to perceive in this history of "Evolution" the truth that a theory which stands merely "in the wisdom of man" has an insecure foundation? Certainly a consideration of the collapse of Evolution will help us to understand why the inspired apostle so

earnestly desired that the faith of his disciples "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. ii. 5).

A doctrine which is established in the mind by the force of human arguments can be shaken by like arguments, and it of necessity falls for lack of support when the arguments by which it was bolstered up are forgotten. But the doctrine which rests upon the Word of God has an unfailing support. It needs no argument to sustain it, and none has force enough to overthrow it. The one question upon which reason has to pass judgment is whether the Bible is in fact God's utterance. If it be such, then the things which Spencerian philosophy labels as "unknowable" are not only not unknowable, but are *revealed*. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but *God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).

This Book makes extraordinary claims and extraordinary demands upon men. It does not purport to exhort, advise, or instruct, from the standpoint of superior human wisdom or of superior intelligence or culture. Neither

docs it seek to commend itself to man's acceptance on the score of expediency, betterment, or progress. In these respects, as in many others, it is radically unlike the writings whereby men seek to help one another. It bases its claim to acceptance *entirely* upon the oft-repeated declaration, "Thus saith Jehovah." It asks no favour of man because of its superior teachings and high standards of life and conduct. The very nature of the Book requires that, if we be logical, we either accept it because "the mouth of *Jehovah* hath spoken it," or that we cast it aside as the greatest of all *human* impostures.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### TRANSFORMATION OF LIFE.

**B**ECAUSE the Bible makes such extraordinary demands and statements, it should be most rigorously scrutinized before it be accepted as the Word of God. We may and *must* assume that the Word of God will have characteristics

whereby it may be distinguished from the word of man; and *à priori*, it will be obvious to us that those characteristics will be such that the *unlearned* can distinguish it from all human productions; or, to use the Bible phrase, such that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein."

We shall not here attempt to set forth those characteristics, but will mention only what is perhaps the chief—namely, the power of this Word to transform the life of those who truly accept and believe it.

What lies before the reader in the following pages is an examination of the account which this Book gives us of the conditions of humanity, as they now are and as they have been during all historic times. This account is so radically opposed to the teachings of the Spencerian school of philosophy, and so repugnant to the natural self-esteem of man, that it would be extremely difficult to account for its presence in any philosophic system which was the product of *human* thought.

We are here confronted by one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Bible. It is the one Book which declares man to be a *fallen* creature, and his world to be a *lost*

world. It is the one Book which unsparingly condemns man, which finds "none righteous, no, not one," but all, without any exception, "guilty before God." And yet, instead of being rejected because of these declarations, so offensive to the natural man, the Bible is the one Book that is translated into every language and dialect, and is read and cherished by every nation, tribe, and people. Surely it has required superhuman power to accomplish this!

The Bible itself—its history, its influence, the wonders it has wrought in the lives of men, its power in the world to-day—is an amazing\*and stupendous FACT, for which infidel philosophy has never ventured to offer an explanation, and *which it can only ignore*. This is but the beginning of the tests which reason, by means of knowledge, may apply to the claims of Scripture. It should, however, suffice, since the only explanation which accounts for the Bible is that it is the Word of God.

We ask, then, is it possible that the Biblical explanation of man and the world can stand the test of a scrutiny which the Darwinian explanation of the "Descent of Man" could

not survive? We confidently assert that the Biblical explanation accounts in a thoroughly satisfactory manner for the present and past conditions of humanity in the mass, and of the nature of the individual human being; and further, we assert that there is now before us, with the facts which recent discoveries have brought into our possession, no explanation which can by any possibility account for the world as it is and has been, excepting that given in Genesis—the Book of Humanity. And if we find this to be indeed the case, if this ancient explanation survives and prevails to-day over that which so recently dominated the minds of men and was supposed to be based upon all the accumulated knowledge of the ages, must not the reason be that the ancient account came from One who knows all things and needs not that any man should instruct Him?

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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE WORLD-SYSTEM: ITS ORIGIN.

**M**AN'S physical organization is such that he cannot obtain, by any investigation he is able to make, the slightest information concerning the causes of social conditions as he finds them in the world, or concerning the origin of the human family, or concerning the end towards which the world movements are hastening. Of these and kindred matters he cannot possibly *know* anything except by Divine revelation.

To speculate touching such matters is foolish and irrational in the extreme; for, apart from revelation, we have no data from which inferences may be drawn, and no possibility of securing such data. Therefore, to one who inquires concerning things spiritual and unseen, concerning the mysteries of sin, sickness, and death, and concerning the tendency of the human heart to evil, the first question to be settled is, Have we a revelation? If he

answers that question in the negative, the inquiry is logically at an end.

We are not here entering upon a discussion of the question whether or not the Bible is true. Even the man who has not for himself decided that question in the affirmative may nevertheless profitably examine the explanation which Holy Scripture gives of the great complex world-system in which he finds himself. By so doing he will be able to test that explanation by the results of his observation, by the whole state of human affairs as revealed to him in his intercourse with his fellow men and in his daily paper, and by what he finds in his own heart. And it may be that, as the Scriptural explanation sheds its light upon the mysteries and perplexities of human nature and human history, he may come not only to comprehend those mysteries, but may also (which is of greater importance) come to realise that the light whereby he has explored them is indeed Divine.

Scripture says that the state of humanity in all its phases is the result of an experimental career upon which the parents of the race embarked without the sanction of God and in violation of His express command. It

tells us further that the conception of this experiment did not originate with man, but was prompted by a spiritual being of great wisdom and power, who aimed to be man's leader in spiritual matters and to direct his career. We were not told what were the full results which Satan hoped to accomplish by alienating the human race from God and attaching it to himself, but we do know that he seeks to be worshipped (Luke iv. 6, 7; Rev. xiii. 4). It is, moreover, evident that his plan did not disclose as its object the destruction or the injury of the race, but that, on the contrary, he represented himself as solicitous for the well-being of humanity, and for the achievement by it of the best possible results that are attainable *apart from God*.

Because of ignorance of what the Scriptures teach about Satan many people would violently resent the statement that the world is following his leadership. This, however, is not an occasion for a show of resentment. No candid person will deny that the enterprise upon which men are engaged consists essentially in the attempt to organize the best possible world, and to achieve the best possible conditions that can be attained *apart from God*.

Who, then, *is* the god of this world; that is, its spiritual leader and organizer, the person according to whose ideals its activities are planned and its course directed? Satan himself declared that all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them are his, and that he can "*give them to whomsoever he will*" (Luke iv. 5, 6). This is a startling statement, and is not one of his lies, for Scripture repeatedly confirms the statement that Satan is the prince and god of this world (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11; Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4). We wish to grasp the import of this statement, and then to test its probability by our observations of the great and complex world-system which envelops us.

Scripture tells us further that the parents of our race were attracted by the supposed advantages of the career upon which Satan urged them to embark, the chief characteristic of that career (as set forth by the tempter) being the opportunity for *progress or self-improvement through the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge*. The first human pair exercised their power of choice by accepting the career thus offered to them, thereby committing the race to the consequences of that

choice, the first consequence being death, or separation from God. Here again we pause to note that the Bible is the only Book which offers an explanation of the stupendous fact of death. Infidel philosophy can but ignore it. Why should man die? Infidel philosophy can give no answer.

According to Scripture, therefore, we have in the world-system around us the consequence of the acceptance by the human family of Satan's programme and leadership, it having pleased God in His wisdom to permit the working out of this experiment until *His* time shall come for bringing it to its inevitable end.

It is particularly to be observed in the Scripture narrative that the Satanic programme, spread before the first man and woman, contained only what the natural mind adjudges to be a desirable and legitimate object of pursuit. Only one thing stood in the way, namely, a Divine commandment which to all appearance was arbitrary. Under the force of plausible reasoning that restraint was overcome. God's wisdom and His love in imposing it were called in question. Man then, for the first time, set himself to do what

he has been prone to do ever since—namely, *to question and pass judgment upon the expediency of a Divine commandment*. He became, in a word, a “higher critic”; that is to say, a man who assumes to criticise the Word of God. Thus it was that the human family entered upon the stupendous experiment of devising a world-system according to Satanic principles.

The account of this momentous event given us in Scripture is exceedingly brief, but every word is charged with a Divine wealth of meaning. The brevity of the account is one of its Divine characteristics, since no human author could have dealt with such an event in that fashion. God does not tell us why, in the moral government of His universe and in the sight of His spiritual creatures, it was necessary that the great human experiment should be suffered to unfold itself through long centuries, until its failure should be demonstrated at every point; but He has seen fit to give us in concise form the history of the event which is the *cause* of all that confronts us in the world around.

Let us study that history, and the more attentively because it is, as a rule, grossly

distorted and grievously misunderstood. And let us not fear to *scrutinize* it with the utmost rigidity, knowing that, if the account be true, we have here *the germ from which all human history*, with its cries and tears, "its oceans of blood and continents of misery," *has unfolded*. If God has given this account, it will not be an allegory. He will not mock us in detailing the tragedy of His creation. If it be true, we shall read its truth in the social conditions of all the ages, and in the nature of each human heart. If it be true, its impress will certainly be observable upon the whole course of human affairs.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE SEEDS OF DOUBT.

**T**HE narrative which we read in the third chapter of Genesis is severe in its brevity and is quite ungarnished. The Narrator described this tremendous

event with superhuman simplicity and calmness. He is not man, to delight in the account of great wickedness or of a great calamity. This is the tragedy of the universe, and the heart of God is grieved. Hence, the account is given in the smallest compass. It is devoid of comment, moralizing, or exhortation. There is no attempt to paint the scene, no indication anywhere of the human propensity to heighten the effect by a single superfluous word.

*The generation of the doubt.*—At the outset God's command is brought under discussion and a question is asked: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"

Turning from this question to the state of human nature we find that man recognizes himself as a moral creature who is somehow invested with a sense of *accountability*. We find a universal tendency of the heart of man to appease that sense of accountability by debating whether God has really forbidden the desired thing. In the life of every son and daughter of Eve this scene has been many times repeated, with the result that the clearly defined commandment has been lost sight of, in the fog of discussion, question,



and argument. But this is precisely what we should expect to find if man's present state has resulted from giving entrance to doubt and suspicion of God. Either that is the explanation or we have none.

The tendency to disbelieve and to question God's Word is undoubtedly the common legacy of the descendants of Adam and Eve. This inherited trait is not usually exhibited in an uncompromising rejection and denial of the Word, but (as in the incident given in the text whereby the human heart was first inoculated with the microbe of unbelief) the inherited trait is usually manifested in the form of a disposition to shade the meaning of the Word, to enlarge or diminish it, or to evade by interpretation, professing all the time a laudable regard for the *spirit* (which may be anything the interpreter likes) as a pretext for disregarding the plain *letter*.

Many religious teachings which find favour with man rely for their acceptance upon *plausibility*. How often we hear the echo of this conversation: "Has God *really* said?" "Surely God, who is all love and tenderness toward His dear children, could never have meant it; for God doth know," &c., &c. This

has a very familiar sound. Where did it originate, if not in the scene described in the third chapter of Genesis?

*The contradiction.*—Doubt having been generated as the result of bringing God's command under discussion, the adversary sets up his own word in direct opposition to what God had said: "Ye shall *not surely die*, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (R.V.).

This doctrine is very comprehensive, and its acceptance by the parents of our race has produced effects bearing unmistakably its imprint—effects which are everywhere and most palpably evident in their descendants. The doctrine seems to defend the character of God against an implication of harshness and severity. "You are unjust to God," says the great questioner, "in supposing that He would visit with death a thing done with a laudable motive." Eternal death is yet disproved to the satisfaction of many by arguments professedly based upon the character of God, upon His love and tenderness. This is a religion that commends itself to the natural heart. It has many forms and millions of adherents

to-day. Small wonder is it that men wish to discard or gloss over that part of the Word of God which says plainly that these religions (though they be termed "Christian") were received, not from God, but from Satan.

Then again, what trait is there which is more common among men than the inclination to believe the first article in Satan's creed: "Ye shall not surely die"? That article of faith has been incorporated into many of the religious systems of mankind. Its influence may be traced in all the manifold attempts of man to disguise to himself the real nature of death, and in all his attempts to make that grim and hideous enemy—the wages of sin—appear to be something different from what it is.

"There is no death; what seems so is transition," says the poet, and men quote this and like phrases with almost religious fervour. What is this but an echo of the first lie which was imposed upon mankind? We place flowers on the coffin and speak of the "angel" of death, endeavouring with such vain expedients to disguise the character of this, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed." This lie has, indeed, eaten deeply into human nature, and

where is there any explanation of this significant fact, save in the Holy Scriptures?

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE GOSPEL OF SELF.

**T**HE inducement which impelled the woman and the man to commit the forbidden act was the desire of self-improvement. The promise was that they should become God-like.

As we look within and around us we cannot fail to perceive that this inducement is still held out as the great incentive to mankind. The Gospel of Self, and particularly of self-improvement, is vigorously promulgated, not only by the leaders of the world-movements who make no religious professions, but even by "eminent divines." Improve yourself, strive ever upward and onward, make something of yourself, rise to your highest possibilities, get knowledge, *be as gods!* Is not this the burden of the exhortations that are incessantly sounded in the ears of men?

Philosophy takes note of the liability of

*repetition* of an act once committed, and of the effect of repetition in the formation of *habit*. What more plausible or satisfactory explanation can we have of this fixed habit of devotion to self-improvement than that given us in the Bible—namely, that it is traced directly back through innumerable repetitions to an act committed at such an early and plastic stage of the race as to influence its entire development?

Put against this the equally striking fact that the Bible is the only Book which directly *opposes* this gospel of self-knowledge and self-improvement, and we have data from which a mind not impaired by the effect of sin could conclusively deduce the Divine authorship of the Bible. If uninspired men could conceivably produce a collection of writings containing a central teaching so radically opposed to the deepest-rooted human tendencies, it would yet require an exercise of almighty power to give that Book an influence exceeding that of all other books combined!

Whence, then, came this gospel of self, which is in such direct opposition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The existence of the gospel of self-improvement is a fact, and it is

the province of philosophy to account for that fact. But again, we have not here a choice between several explanations any one of which may be the true one. Either that gospel was delivered to the human race in the persons of its parents or we know nothing about its origin.

And does not the Divine origin of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ appear from its direct opposition to the gospel of the natural man? The teaching of our Lord is to *deny* self (Matt. xvi. 24; Luke ix. 23), instead of exalting or improving self; not to be as gods, or even "to make a man of oneself," but to "become as little children" (Matt. xviii. 3). He teaches, not *self-reliance*, but self-distrust, and reliance solely upon God. According to His instruction, we are not to develop our faculties to the utmost, but to mortify the members which are on the earth (Col. iii. 5). His witness is ever willing to say "*I must decrease*" (John iii. 30), even to the very extinction of *self*, until he can joyfully exclaim, "*Not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. ii. 20).

Just as was done in Eden, this gospel of self-improvement has been proclaimed throughout the ages, and is to-day proclaimed in the

name of God Himself, and by those who profess to speak of His apostles. Of all this we have been duly warned: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the *apostles of Christ*. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. xi. 13-15).

The world is peopled to-day by worshippers of the "progress" and "destiny" of humanity—a progress which is effected, and a destiny which is to be achieved, through the very means commended by Satan to our first parents. Even those who try to live according to the Word of God are not free from the disposition to give praise and glory to man for his wonderful achievements, and for the supposed success which has attended his strivings after progress in the direction chosen by the first man at the instigation of Satan.

As we contemplate the complex world-system which has resulted from the zealous pursuit, continued throughout the period of six thousand years, of the Satanic doctrine of self-improvement by the acquisition of knowledge,

do we wonder that here and there a voice is raised in appeal for the "simple life"? And, as has been well said: "what is the simple life but to follow Christ?" The true man of God has always been the man of the tent and the altar. He has no part or interest in the multitudinous affairs, pursuits, interests, and pleasures of the world-system. *His* citizenship is in heaven, and he looks ever ahead to a city that hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God. And the only *Perfect* Man who has yet trodden this earth is One who in this world-scheme had not even where to lay His head. He was cut off and had nothing (Dan. ix. 26 R.V.); and on the other hand, He could say, "The *prince of this world* cometh and hath *nothing in Me*" (John xiv. 30). The prince of this world had nothing in Him, and He was cut off and had nothing in that world-system whereof Satan is prince. They that are His are content to be like Him in "this present evil world" from which He came to deliver them (Gal. i. 4).



## CHAPTER VII.

AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT (2 Cor. xi. 14).

WITH the acceptance by Adam and Eve of the doctrine presented by Satan and defined in Gen. iii., 5, he became the spiritual and religious leader of the human race. He is still, and through all the ages has been, the religious teacher of every child of Adam who has not been born again of the last Adam.

Accustomed as we are to associate the prince of this world chiefly with what is vicious and depraved, and with the crimes and vices to which the baser part of humanity become addicted, we are apt to overlook another aspect of the character of Satan, and to misapprehend the nature of his designs for and upon his subjects. We question if the Devil of Christendom, as generally represented, could ever have gained ascendancy over mankind. But the Devil of Scripture, the highest of all created intelligences, greater even in dignity than the

Archangel (Jude 9), *is a very different personage*. The latter is more necessary to the explanation of the condition and history of humanity, and of the contradictions and mysteries of human nature, than is the ether to the explanation of the phenomena of light and electricity.

Not only is belief in the existence of such a spiritual personage a thoroughly rational belief, but, on the other hand, it is irrational to believe otherwise. No explanation has ever been brought forward which is capable of accounting for the conditions, contradictions, and mysteries referred to, except that given in the third chapter of Genesis.

The moment we recognize the true character of that being with whom our first parents closed their bargain, we receive light upon the problems that perplex the human soul. The first man, by the exercise of his power of choice, committed the race to Satan's leadership. The latter has done and is doing his very best, not to drag men down, but *to lift men up* and to aid them in working out for them the happiest results. The fact that he has succeeded so well demonstrates his great wisdom and power. The fact that he has not

succeeded better demonstrates that his wisdom and power are not those of Deity. That fact proves also that God is *necessary* to the life and welfare of man. This is the first lesson for the individual man.

Satan, doubtless, believed thoroughly in his own system, and in his ability to lead this newly-created race into conditions of self-satisfaction and self-enjoyment. On this assumption we may well believe that he is chagrined and disappointed at the corruption, blemishes, and failures which everywhere appear, and annoyed by the folly and perversity of his followers in choosing vice, crime, and dishonesty in preference to "high ideals" and "noble aspirations." Knowing God in a way that we do not, he could form an estimate of the scope and chances he would have in assuming the leadership of this race, should he succeed in attaching it to himself. What he could *not* foresee was, first, the follies into which the poor, helpless creatures would blunder when deprived of communion with God; and second, the marvellous work of redemption which Infinite-wisdom would evolve and Infinite love would execute.

Consider the results of this great experiment,

this joint-adventure of Devil and man, as those results are spread before our eyes! Surely they are great and impressive in their abundance and variety, and notwithstanding all the failures, disappointments and ruins, and all the sad, dark, and ugly features which cannot be hidden out of sight, we must admit that "the god of this world" is a personage of great intelligence and resourcefulness.

The world-system, apart from God's agencies and people, who are in but not of it, is marvellous in its complexity and detail, as well as in the character and variety of its activities. Its grandeur is undeniable, and it challenges our admiration, although we perceive everywhere an incurable tendency in the various parts of the system to fall into disarrangement, disorder and decay.

This wonderful system has worlds within worlds. We hear of the world of business, the world of politics, the world of fashion, the world of pleasure, the world of science, the world of sport, the world of finance, the world of music, the world of literature, the dramatic world, the social world, the industrial world, the commercial world, the religious world. Everyone can have a share! This prodigious

world-system includes monarchies, republics, despotisms, laws, customs, traditions, corporations, syndicates, trusts, banks, clubs, brotherhoods, colleges, theatres, race-tracks, gambling-halls, trades unions, philanthropies, liquor saloons, brothels, inebriate homes and cures, sanitariums, reformatories, temperance societies, gaols, libraries, cemeteries, insane asylums, courts, legislatures, lobbies, stock markets, department stores, insurance companies, newspapers, magazines, automobiles, philosophies, fashions, cults, factories, railroads, navies, armies, high explosives, diplomacies, peace tribunals, hypnotism, spiritualism, Christian Science, Higher Criticism, New Thought, and religious systems to suit every shade of opinion. To all these and other restless, stirring, feverish activities, organizations and contrivances, is given the imposing title of "CIVILIZATION," whose glorious mission is to go forward and conquer the earth for man.\*

In such a system it should be possible to suit everyone. There is something for the moral man, something for the religious man, something for the thoughtful man, something

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\* In this connection, however, see "Divine Agencies in the World" (p. 85).

for the benevolent man, something for the ambitious man, something for the industrious man, something for the cultured man, something for the idle man, something for the vicious man. In a word there is something for everyone, *with a single exception*. In the entire system there is nothing for the Perfect Man. For Him this system had nothing; no place at the inn, no place to lay His head—nothing but a manger, a cross, and a tomb. Between Him and this world-system there was *nothing in common*. Consequently, when the time arrived for Him to say “This is your hour and the power of darkness” (Luke xxii. 53), the leaders and representatives of the world’s culture, the world’s intelligence, the world’s progress, the world’s power, and the world’s religion, led Him with expressive ceremony “outside the camp” and nailed Him to the tree. “*And sitting down, they watched Him there*” (Matt. xxvii. 36).

And now, patient reader, who have read thus far—perhaps merely from curiosity to see how the writer sustains a somewhat novel proposition—let me put a question in deep seriousness: What do *you* think of “this world,” *you* who perhaps call yourself by the name

of that crucified One? Are you quite sure that you are not one of that religious throng who, on that day (and ever since) have considered Him only to the extent of turning aside during a brief period of leisure in order to contemplate, while sitting at ease, the spectacle of His dying agonies? To what extent are your hopes and interests wrapped up in this evil world, whose leaders placed Him there; and how far are your affections set upon it? How much of *yourself* would perish if this world-system were swept off the earth the next moment? Is there any possibility that you, too, are an indifferent spectator of the scene which the world enacted on Calvary?—that scene wherein were revealed both the true nature of the world and also the limit of the love of God?

And you, all you others who do not call yourselves "Christians," yet who cannot avoid seeing, however much you may try, that Figure nailed to the cross, "is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" Indeed, it is *everything* to you.

That, indeed, was *their hour* and the power of darkness. *His hour* had not yet come; *but it is coming*. As surely as we have had Satan's leadership and the very best world that

men could fashion upon his principles, so surely will we have Jesus Christ and a world arranged and governed upon His principles. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (James v. 7).

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FAILURE OF THE SCHEME.

**T**RULY, this world-system is a marvellous affair—stupendous, gigantic, remorseless, terrifying! Seemingly composed entirely of human elements, it is yet strangely unmanageable and perverse in human hands. If we study any number of the individual human beings of which this prodigy is composed, we shall be utterly unable to discover in them an explanation of some of its characteristics and of its behaviour as an organization.

Though composed apparently *of* human beings and existing presumably *for* human beings, it nevertheless devours men, women, and children placidly and for trifling considerations. Society will do what individual



members of society would be incapable of doing. The world has been aptly compared to a slave-ship in which a few favoured passengers dance and make merry on deck, utterly oblivious of the groans of a dense mass of suffering humanity beneath.

Those who occupy the positions of worldly advantage are for ever soliciting the admiration of mankind at large for this gigantic world-machine. They never tire of calling attention to the wonders of its construction and operation, and to the many ingenious improvements which are from time to time introduced into it. To bow down and worship the Thing is, with many, an act of religion; and the multitude are intellectually sand-bagged into accepting the doctrine of the "progress of man."

If anyone ventures to question this creed, and to call attention to facts tending to show that the progress of the world is, not upward, but downward, he is instantly denounced as a "pessimist," to whom no heed should be paid.

And yet observers do note that the machinery of the vast affair creaks fearfully at times, and manifests strain at every joint; that there is a woeful lack of harmony and co-ordination

among the various parts, and that only by the most vigilant attention and by incessant repairs is the thing kept in operation at all! It is undeniable that, in spite of expedients and experiments, and of all the care and labour bestowed upon the affair, its parts are constantly getting out of gear and working havoc with human life and human projects.

The only reason why the centrifugal forces of evil have not long ago disrupted the whole affair is because their tendencies have been checked by the Divine agencies which are in the world, but not of it. These restraining influences are reserved for consideration in a later chapter; but it is pertinent here to remind the reader that he "who now hindereth will hinder until he be taken out of the way," and that then shall come the full disclosure of evil in the person of "that wicked one" (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8).

Why, then, notwithstanding the manifest imperfections and failures of the system, does the gospel of "progress" find such ready acceptance among men? Upon the assumption of the truth of Scripture the answer is clear and satisfactory. It is because that is the gospel which was accepted by humanity at the begin-

ning of its present career. Having chosen it, man is reluctant to confess the error of his choice. He rather clings to it with all the tenacity of superstition, and tries to persuade himself that he likes the result of his choice.

But even so, the true character and tendency of the world-system would be recognized by the majority of thoughtful men and women, if they were not under the blinding influence of the egregiously erroneous notion that *God, and not Satan, is running the world*. Ignorant, but well-meaning persons evolve such pleasing sentiments as that "God's in His heaven, all's well with the world"; or they misquote (by partly quoting) Romans viii. 28, saying that "all things work together for good"; and the careless multitudes accept these as Bible truths. There is no deliverance from the bondage of such errors except in embracing the truth clearly taught in Scripture—that Satan, and not Jehovah, is the god of this present evil age, and that Satan, not Jehovah, is directing its present activities. This teaching accounts completely for everything which, on any other hypothesis, is mysterious and perplexing.

The god of this gigantic world-system displays great ingenuity and fertility in devising

new expedients for temporarily curing the innumerable defects which crop out in all parts of the organization. We see activity on all sides, a patient building up of one place while another falls into decay, a never-ceasing but never-successful effort to prevent the decay of nations, the failures of government, the oppressive use of power, the moral decay of the prosperous classes, and the universal spread of selfishness and corruption. Chiefly are the activity and ingenuity of Satan exercised in the multitude of expedients whereby the minds of men are occupied and diverted from contemplating and inquiring the reason of the inherent rottenness of the world-system and the certainty of its ultimate destruction.

It is evident enough to those who will but give themselves a chance to think, that *something is vitally wrong with the system*. Death is intrenched at its heart. Crime and cruelty and misery in many forms pervade it. Nothing is permanent. "Change and decay in *all* around we see." The presence of these grim advance-agents of destruction is detected in all things wherein man has a part. Yet somehow the presiding genius of this world-system contrives to keep men busy in one way and another,

and to keep alive the delusion that, as a general proposition, "things are getting better." Thus do the sons of Adam continue to exhibit their inherited predisposition to the acceptance of that pleasing doctrine: "Ye shall not surely die; ye shall be as God."

How admirably are all these world-activities and occupations (which those who should know better are accustomed to ascribe to Almighty God) calculated to accomplish the great Satanic purpose of hiding from men the Gospel of Jesus Christ! How admirably do they serve the end of confirming men in the fatal belief that humanity does not need a Saviour! Let anyone try to conceive a state of things which would better accomplish this object than that state of things which prevails in the world to-day, and he will speedily give it up as an impossibility.

How illuminating then are the words of the apostle in 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4:—"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" (or rather as in the R.V., "them that are perishing") in whom the *god of this world* hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

This is the meaning of it all; and we never could have discovered that meaning for ourselves. God alone could reveal it to us. But now that He has done so, we are without excuse if we refuse to believe Him; and we have miserably failed in the use of our natural intelligence if it does not, upon examination of the conditions around us, confirm His revelation.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BIBLE SOLUTION.

**I**T is entirely safe to assert that, if any infidel or agnostic philosophy offered an interpretation of the world which explained the facts so clearly as does this Scriptural explanation, it would have received and would have retained universal acceptance. Why then is the explanation given in the Bible so widely rejected? Here, again, we have an extraordinary phenomenon, and we must look into God's Word to ascertain that this is another effect of the fall of man—namely the inherited tendency of the natural heart to unbelief.

Yes, the vast system spread over the earth

is a *perishing* system, containing in itself the seeds of decay. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof" (1 John ii. 17). That fact is plain enough without the statement of Scripture. But what if it be also true, as the Scripture declares, that they who commit themselves to this system and its leader shall surely perish with it and with him!

Are you, my reader, trusting for your safety to your good character, to your pure motives and kindly deeds; or are you perhaps trusting to the chance that it will all "come right somehow"? Is your heart occupied with the affairs of this world, its projects and ambitions, and are you for your future happiness looking forward to the working out of some detail of the world-system? This (unless Scripture lies in its central part) is the *very purpose* of that world-system; whereas the purpose of God is that our hearts should be occupied with the invisible and eternal things, and our outlook should be for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus ii. 13).

In Scripture, then, we find a complete answer to every question which arises in the mind concerning the presence, at all times and every-

where in human nature and human affairs, of sin, sickness, and death, and concerning the presence in the world of accidents, corruption, and decay. The answer to every such question is that this is not God's world, but Satan's. The characteristics which we observe in the world's organization, and in the way in which its functions are discharged, are just such as would be expected in an organization planned and managed by a personage such as the Satan of Scripture is described to be—namely, a fallen spiritual being of consummate wisdom, the highest of all created intelligences, the head of vast powers and principalities, but coming short of the power and wisdom of Deity, and existing in a state of rebellion against God.

The great truth that Satan is "the god of this world," which is absolutely needed for the understanding of the existence of evil in the world, and which Almighty God has revealed for the very purpose of guarding us from the manifold dangers arising out of ignorance of it, is missed by many who accept the Bible as the Word of God. These are consequently in much danger and in needless perplexity because of the abundant manifestations of evil and imperfection in the world. In the light of this



important truth, all such perplexity disappears, since it is obvious that those grievous things, for whose presence we could not account in God's world, are quite in place in Satan's world.

We read in Scripture that the *earth* is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. He sends the rain and the sunshine, and gives the increase of the field and the fruits of the earth. But the *world* is Satan's. His ownership of the world, so far from being questioned by Scripture, is strongly asserted and acknowledged. Satan displayed to Jesus "*all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*" (Matt. iv. 8) and offered to give them to Him upon one condition. Jesus refused the offer, but did not question the ownership. Consequently the world is still Satan's. Jesus acknowledged this at a later time, saying, "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (John xiv. 30), and the last of His apostles, near the close of his long life, described the condition of affairs, saying, "*The whole world lieth in the evil one*" (1 John v. 19 R. V.). Jesus declared that the world hated Him because He "testified of it that *its works are evil*" (John vii. 7). He did not distinguish or bestow praise on *any* of

the works of this world-system upon which men pride themselves, but pronounced them all uncompromisingly and unequivocally *evil*. The man who dares do that is still hated.

It is well at this point to have in mind a further and very striking characteristic of this great organization which we call "the world." That men should admire it is natural, considering the part which men have played in elaborating and running it; but each individual knows full well that the part he has performed has been largely *forced*. He has been only to a very limited extent a free agent, feeling always, and frequently recognizing, *the force of some one, or some thing, unseen and yet potent in the affairs of the world.*

This is clearly recognized in that very common expression "the force of circumstances." What is the force referred to in this conventional phrase? Our object is to identify the person or the thing by whom or by which is exerted the force that makes the world what it is, and that compels men and women to act as they do. Therefore, we take due note of the many evidences of great wisdom, ingenuity, skill and energy which are displayed in the conduct of the world's affairs. We must

acknowledge that, by these indications, the great ability of the presiding genius of the world's affairs is fully established.

But our observations do not stop there. The evidences on every side of want of foresight, and of failure to anticipate undesirable events and to provide for emergencies, are too numerous and too striking to be overlooked. They are also much too serious to be made light of. Nations arm themselves and make war against other nations; men oppress their fellows; society separates into hostile classes, whereof the upper stratum can always hear the mutterings of the discontented and oppressed beneath; trusted officials of financial institutions default or enrich themselves by fraudulent practices; commercial organizations thrive by systematic knavery; legislation is almost openly bought and sold; municipal corruption increases; and social morals decay with the increase of wealth and culture.

Looking backward through the eyes of history to the events of past generations, we observe that—while man has always tried to put the best face upon the social condition of his day, and has always given the most favourable account of his times—nevertheless, *failure*

has been ever the record of the human race. Nations rise and fall; and whenever another fair experiment in government is attempted, under new conditions and with all past experience for a guide, it is only a matter of time before the very ends sought for—increase of wealth and power—show that they are but agents of destruction.

What can explain all this so clearly as the fact that the god and prince of this world, with all his transcendent abilities, lacks the power and wisdom of the Infinite?

As we write these lines the attention of the public is being drawn to surprising revelations of dishonesty in the management of large insurance companies, revelations which would certainly shock the moral sense of the community if the community had any residuum of moral sense to be shocked. One who looks at all beneath the surface of these shameful disclosures cannot fail to realize that they are but indications, surface eruptions, of *diseased conditions* which lie deep in human nature and human society. Once again, as in the days before the Flood, the Lord God, looking down from heaven, sees that "all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth." Is it not so?

And is it not also true that the very worst and most significant feature of these revelations is that they produce little or no expression of deep or widespread public indignation? A few caustic editorials appear in the newspapers, and a few denunciations are heard from the pulpit; but the people, as a whole, are indifferent, unmoved, or what is even worse, are merely entertained.

Meanwhile, the blind and fatuous leaders of the enterprises of the age and the exponents of the much-lauded "spirit of the age" continue to prate of progress and improvement, of the conquests of civilization and of the great strides of science! Only the few who have sought and obtained wisdom from the sole Source of wisdom recognize that the state of things around us now is "as it was in the days of Noah."

And this is the outcome of the free application of human genius and intelligence, backed up by the amplest natural resources and aided by every factor which is supposed to make for progress!

What conclusion is to be drawn from it, and what remedy is to be applied? We hear "enticing words of men's wisdom," such as

“legislation,” “education,” “culture,” “publicity,” “honest enforcement of laws,” &c. But who is so shallow and ignorant as not to know that these have all been tried, have done their utmost, and have failed? The corruption now appearing in the “highest circles,” where education and culture have done their utmost, where every experiment of legislation has been attempted, and where every natural incentive to honest dealing exists, has its source *in the heart of man*. It flows from that fountain of sin which sprung from the transgression of the first Adam, and which can be purified only by the fountain of life which springs from the blood of the last Adam.

What sane conclusion, then, is possible but this, that man's experiment has been tried out *to the very end*. And what remedy remains, but that which the arrogant and unbelieving heart has always sought to avoid, but which God has always urged in such words as these: “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. xlv. 22)? And do we not see written large and clear upon the events of our day that but little time remains wherein to learn wisdom, to heed the oft-repeated warnings, and

to turn unto Him before He leaves His mediatorial throne, before the day of grace is ended, and He comes again to shake terribly the earth?

At this moment the chief executive of the nation, in the course of a series of speeches, feels called upon to take notice of these things, and here is his comment upon them :

“The man of great means who achieves fortune by crooked methods does wrong to the whole body politic. But he not merely does wrong to, he becomes a source of imminent danger to, other men of great means, for his ill-won success tends to arouse a feeling of resentment which, if it becomes inflamed, fails to differentiate between the men of wealth who have done decently and the men of wealth who have not done decently.

“The conscience of our people has been deeply shocked by the revelations made of recent years as to the way in which some of the great fortunes have been obtained and used, and there is, I think, in the minds of the people at large a strong feeling that a serious effort must be made to put a stop to the cynical dishonesty and

contempt for right which have thus been revealed. I believe that something, and I hope that a good deal can be done by law to remedy the state of things complained of.

“But when all that can be has thus been done, there will yet remain much which the law cannot touch, and which must be reached by the force of public opinion.” (Speech of President Roosevelt, Oct. 2, 1905.)

The fact is that the conscience of our people has *not* been shocked in the slightest by these revelations, and the best that a well-meaning man, imbued with the so-called optimism of the time, can give us is the hollowest of conventional phrases, the futile suggestion (in which he can hardly believe himself) that something “can be done by law to remedy the state of things complained of,” and the reluctant confession that there will yet remain “much which the law cannot touch.” It is safe to say that not one intelligent person who reads this comment upon the most *important existing condition of our national life* will have the least confidence in the remedial effect of “the force of public opinion,” to which dubious agency



our President commits this hideous and loathsome disease in the vitals of the body politic. It would be just as sensible to rely upon the force of public opinion to arrest and turn back the ravages of cholera or smallpox; but what else can be suggested? Would it not seem that men would be compelled at least to appeal to the power of God, by reason of the manifest failure of every other remedy? Will anyone say that it is the act of a rational and enlightened mind to look rather to the force of public opinion than to the return of our Lord from heaven to bring in everlasting righteousness? Are we not at last justified in receiving this as our "blessed hope," and acknowledging that there is none beside?

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## CHAPTER X.

### "FIG LEAVES."

**T**HE promise of Satan began immediately to be fulfilled, though not, we may be sure, in the manner understood and expected by his dupes. The woman ate of the fruit, and the man, who stood by during the colloquy (for the account

says that she gave unto her husband, who was with her), immediately followed her example. The man apparently was prudent and willing to listen to, without taking part in, the discussion between the woman and the first higher critic of the Word of God. Apparently he watched her experiment, and, seeing that no visible harm followed, imitated her action. Have we here the explanation of woman's influence over man in spiritual matters and in affairs wherein the affections are concerned? The result was, indeed, the immediate acquisition of knowledge. "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

Moreover, this newly-acquired knowledge was immediately applied to practical use, and mankind forthwith entered upon its career of activity. "And they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons."

In this short sentence the Divine source of the narrative may be clearly perceived by all who have eyes to see. The two concise statements of this sentence set forth the subjective and objective consequences flowing from man's disloyalty to God and his acceptance of the leadership of Satan. Contained within this

brief sentence, which is devoid of comment and phrased with superhuman simplicity, is an epitome of human nature and human history. What the man and woman immediately acquired was the now predominant trait of *self-consciousness*. "They saw that they were naked." Previously they were naked, but "were *not* ashamed" (Gen. ii. 25).

*God-consciousness* has now been lost and in its place has come *self-consciousness*; and henceforth self-contemplation is to be the characteristic and bane of mankind, laying the foundation for those inner feelings or mental conditions comprehended under the term "unhappiness," and for all the external strivings whereby effort is made to attain a better condition.

And what are all these efforts and activities but further endeavours of the same sort as the very first human effort, which history has thus recorded for us, after man's departure on his career of self-reliance? Is it not plain that the act here recorded is the germ of all the subsequent human activities? Becoming conscious of self, no longer having a present God to supply all necessities, and being, moreover, under the delusion of the possibility of better

conditions, man begins to invent and contrive. He makes himself an apron to cover his nakedness; and this has been the occupation of his descendants to the present day. The occupation thus handed on from generation to generation takes a great variety of forms, but through them all the nature and object of the occupation remain the same.

Man was obviously not made for self-contemplation, but rather to look away from himself. This is apparent from his very anatomy. Man is, as to all his vital organs, practically hidden from himself. The important functions of the body are carried on by concealed apparatus and engines, marvellous contrivances whose operations and processes still, after all these centuries of self-examination, remain unsolvable mysteries. The processes of the mind are absolutely inscrutable to the mind itself. The senses are adapted to giving man information concerning external things; but concerning themselves, or how they transmit information from without, they can tell him practically nothing. Consciousness, that mysterious reservoir wherein is gathered all man's knowledge, contains no knowledge whatever of its own nature. What a calamity, therefore, has be-

fallen a creature so organized, in becoming *self-centred* and addicted to *self-contemplation*!

To this cause we may trace all morbid, unwholesome, and depressing mental states. This is commonly recognized, and yet, despite its own efforts and despite all the manifold contrivances wherewith the world is equipped, how difficult it is for the natural man to avoid lapsing into *self-contemplation*! Indeed, knowing nothing better, nothing higher and more important than *self*, his thoughts must naturally gravitate to that object as a centre when released from the control of the will. There is nothing more attractive than childhood in its freshness and *unconsciousness of self*; but when *self-consciousness* begins the charm disappears. Do we not see in this the profound reason why the Lord Jesus Christ pointed to a "little child" as the type of those who shall compose His kingdom?

And what is it that spurs men along the many lines of human activity? Is it not the same subjective condition which prompted the making of the apron of fig-leaves—namely, man's consciousness of some deficiency, and the desire to supply it by his own efforts? This is only putting in another form the oft-stated

incentive to human exertion, namely, the so-called "duty" of the individual to develop what is in him, and thus to rise to his "highest possibilities."

There is, indeed (and it must not be ignored, because it comes from God Himself), another reason for activity on man's part, namely, the daily recurring needs of the body. God declared it as one of the consequences of man's disobedience that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread. But this is not the career, nor was it included in the career, Divinely appointed for man. On the contrary, it is a penal consequence of his departure from the Divinely appointed career. Man does not by any natural impulse accept, nor does he without protest accept, the "gospel of work." It is not God's Word that declares incessant toil to be the purpose for which he was created. This, again, is a doctrine which proceeded from a very different source.

Moreover, it is one thing to labour for the necessities of the mortal body, and it is another and very different matter to labour for the success of Satan's world-scheme. Following but a short way down the stream of human history which had its source in the Garden of Eden,

we observe that it was Cain's descendants who builded a city, who invented metal-working, who devised musical instruments, and who first composed poetry in praise of the doings of man (Gen. iv. 17-24).

Those whose occupation is "to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10) have no share in the occupation which absorbs the great mass of humanity, namely, the futile attempt to make earth a satisfactory habitation for man *apart from God*. Recognizing that the experiment to which Adam committed his family was the attempt to achieve a destiny without Divine aid, those who have received the truth of God into their hearts and have been made thereby wise unto salvation, understand that the end will be a failure which will be recognized by all in the light of His presence, and the destruction of all the works that men have so laboriously wrought.

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## CHAPTER XI.

"WHERE ART THOU?"

**I**F, then, one admits the truth of God into his heart, which every man may do if he will, the real state of the world's affairs will be made plain to him; and he will understand from the drift of those affairs, as well as from the revelation of God in the Scriptures, the end to which the world is hastening. His concern will then be to know if God has a remedy.

Manifestly, our knowledge of God's remedy can come only through revelation; and again we are confronted by the fact that, if the Bible be not God's written Word, we have no revelation, and consequently no remedy. The inquiry, therefore, cannot be pursued except upon the assumption that the Bible is God's revelation to His creature, man. If that Word be true, then we know that God began immediately after man's departure to seek his recovery; and the unfolding of the Divine plan of redemption is most satisfying to the regenerated mind and heart.



The very first words of Him whose holy law had been broken and whose love had been suspected and spurned, reveal Him as seeking His fallen creature. "Where art thou?" is the question; and from that moment to the present we have the redemption of man proclaimed as the purpose of Jehovah, to be fulfilled in the person of the Eternal Son, who in the fulness of time came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). He came also to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John iii. 8), and since man learned his way from the Devil, we are not surprised to learn that God's ways are very different: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Jehovah" (Isa. lv. 8).

Accordingly, He bids us no longer to contemplate self, but to contemplate *Him*—"looking unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 2), to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. iii. 1), and to look "not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen" (2 Cor. iv. 18). He bids us to cease from the vain attempt at the improvement of the old nature, which cannot be made fit for the presence of God, but is hopelessly corrupted and doomed

to death, and offers instead to all who believe on Him a *new* nature, "born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible" (1 Pet. i. 23); for "if any man be in Christ he is a *new* creature" (2 Cor. v. 17). He bids us cease from the futile attempt at supplying our own deficiencies and covering ourselves with our own righteousness; for *Christ* is of God *made* unto us righteousness (1 Cor. i. 30). He would have us all, as did His servant Paul, count all things that the world can offer us as refuse, in order that we may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own, but that which is from God by faith, that we may *know Him*, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death (Phil. iii. 8-10).

In one word, God's remedy for the havoc wrought by the first Adam is *Christ*, the last Adam, in whom all the purposes of God in the creation of man will be fulfilled, and in whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen (2 Cor. i. 20).

God assures us that He Himself has undertaken and accomplished the *work* of redemption, and that our part is, not to work, but to *believe* and accept the work done for us. For

justification is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5); or, as elsewhere stated by our Lord Himself: "This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 29). The original sin was unbelief and distrust. Eve disbelieved *in her heart*. Hence belief *with the heart* is the turning point of man's conversion (Rom. x. 10). Man must turn with his heart to God and confess the crucified and risen Saviour. More than this is not required for salvation, *but less will not serve.*

It is possible, alas! to have an intellectual comprehension of all this, and yet not be united with Christ through faith. One may arrive at the conclusion, upon examination of the conditions within and around him, that the record of Genesis is, indeed, that of an actual historical event. He may even thereby become satisfied that the Scriptures are inspired throughout; and yet he may have no real knowledge of Christ, and may belong wholly to this perishing world. For saving faith is of the heart. One must be brought by the Spirit of God under conviction of sin (the sin of unbelief), and be born again by acceptance of

Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and as the one and only way of coming to the Father.

The foregoing pages have not been written for the purpose merely of vindicating the historical character of the third chapter of Genesis. To convince the intellect of the reader as to this would be of no advantage, unless the conviction goes farther and reaches his *heart*. The best and most convincing of human arguments affords no certainty to the mind and no peace to the soul. One may to-day be persuaded by argument to give intellectual assent to a doctrine, and begin to doubt its truth to-morrow when the steps of the argument that wrought conviction slip from his memory. The Word of the Living God alone can impart absolute conviction and afford a permanent basis for certainty. When belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, is admitted to the heart, *which any man can do at any time by the exercise of his free will*, faith comes to abide eternally; for it is accompanied by such a work of grace, such conviction and light, and such manifestations of Divine Presence and power, that the heart necessarily surrenders itself with full confidence to His keeping.

“I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand” (John x. 28).

Nevertheless, an appeal to the reason should not be in vain; for, as the result of intellectual conviction, one may be induced to *act upon* the truth which has been intellectually apprehended. The object of these pages, therefore, is to rouse the indifferent and callous soul to action—to the making of a *choice* between Satan’s world and God’s, between the way of life and the way of death. “Behold,” says Jehovah, “I set before you the way of life and the way of death” (Jer. xxi. 8). You have a will, my friend, and you have the power to exercise it in this matter. If persuaded in your mind of the truth of God’s Word, or if only partly persuaded, *call upon Him!* Say, “Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!” Ask Him to show you whether these things be true, to give you His Holy Spirit according to the promise (Luke xi. 13), and to reveal the Lord Jesus to you, not only as the Saviour of the world, but also as the Saviour of your individual soul. Ask Him for *faith*, which is not, as many seem to suppose, believing something without foundation, but is the very

“*evidence* of things not seen” (Heb. xi. 1), evidence of the highest value because proceeding from God Himself.

“Where, then, is *the seat of faith*? Not in the intellect, which sees the logical connection or the historic evidence; nor in the imagination, which recognises the beauty and organic symmetry, and reproduces the pictures; not in the conscience, which testifies to the righteousness and truth of the revelation; but in a something which lies *deeper than these*, in which all these centre, and to which all these return. It is *with the heart*, as Scripture teaches, that man believeth. There, whence are the issues of life—emotional, intellectual, moral, spiritual, in that secret place to which God alone has access, God’s Word as a seed begets *faith*, God’s Word as a light kindles light, and the *man* becomes a *believer*” (Saphir).

Such is the nature of saving faith, which all may have who will seek it from the Author of faith, and which they only who possess it can comprehend. We cannot impart our faith to another, but we can witness to God who gave it, and can tell to others how they may obtain “a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. i. 1).

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE DECEIVER OF THE WORLD.

SATAN is given, among other descriptive titles, that of "the *deceiver* of the whole world" (Rev. xii. 9 R.V.). Jesus Christ is truth, life and light. Satan is deception, darkness and death. The world, as now organized, is full of "the deceivableness of unrighteousness." In order to have the capability of deception, the spurious thing must closely imitate the genuine. A lie does not deceive unless it has the guise of truth. The deceptive contrivance or device, in order to fulfil the object of its author, must have the promise and appearance of desirable properties while lacking the substance thereof.

The characteristic of deceitfulness may be discovered in Satan's world-scheme at whatever point it may be closely scrutinized. Scripture speaks of the "deceitfulness of riches" (Matt. xiii. 22), and this may well serve as the typical illustration of the subject, because there is in

our day no other object so prominently set up by men before their own eyes as worthy of their most strenuous efforts, no other object in the ardent pursuit of which so many human beings are intently engaged as the acquisition of money. From generation to generation man's experience has uniformly witnessed to the truth of the Scriptural statement touching the deceitfulness of riches; and yet the power of deception therein was never greater in its intensity or more disastrous in its results than at the present day. The amassing of colossal fortunes is one of the striking characteristics of the age. Men are, indeed, heaping up their treasure in the last days (James v. 3). No natural explanation will account for the deceptive power of riches. It can only be understood in the light of the explanation of Scripture that Satan is the god—that is to say, the architect, constructor and engineer—of this world-system, and that his character inheres in his work.

But let the scrutinizing gaze of the inquirer be directed to any other object which the director of the world's affairs places before the minds of men, and he will perceive that the same quality of deceitfulness resides in them



all. The apostle speaks of the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 13) and of its *hardening* effect upon the nature of man. This brief word of Scripture is a veritable search-light whereby the depths of human nature and the very core of the world-system may be explored. It is beyond question a ray of the "true light." Sin is deceitful, and men are beyond controversy hardened thereby. The truth of this appears on all sides.

Is there, then, no one to whom we may go; no one in whom there is no deceit and no darkness at all? Yes, there is *One*, even He of whom God says, "This is My beloved Son, *hear Him.*" And if we heed this command and listen to His words, what do we hear Him say concerning this world through which we are now passing? He has many things to say on this subject, solemn, pointed, urgent words. He says that it shall not profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul (Matt. xvi. 26). He says that if we are of the world the world will love us, for it loves its own; but that they who are His are not of the world, because He has chosen them out of the world, and that therefore the world hates them (John xv. 19). He says that if the world hates us

we may know that it *hated Him* before it hated us (v. 18). He foretold that the world would rejoice at His death (John xvi. 20), and declared that His disciples were not of the world, even as He was not of the world (John xvii. 14). The apostle who was closest to His heart gives us a picture of the men of the world and the theme of their talk, saying, "They are of the world, therefore *speak they of the world and the world heareth them*" (1 John iv. 5). Whoever has something to say in praise of the world, however false his flatteries may be, is sure of an audience. And through the same apostle God speaks these piercing words:—

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For *all* that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is *not* of the Father, but is *of the world*. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John ii. 15-17, R.V.).

What can this be but the direct consequence of the event described in the third chapter of Genesis? All the outward manifestations of evil in the world are classed under three heads.

These manifestations have no explanation, and are absolutely incomprehensible without the event recorded in that chapter. With it "all that is in the world" is intelligible. The mother of all mankind "saw that the tree was GOOD FOR FOOD"—the lust of the flesh; "and that it was A DELIGHT TO THE EYES"—the lust of the eyes; "and that the tree was to be desired TO MAKE ONE WISE"—the vainglory of life.

Is it possible for any rational man, after paying the slightest attention to these Scriptures and perceiving but a small fraction of the magnitude and universality of the truth contained in these few words, to doubt that they are from God? Surely, it must be plain, upon the briefest consideration, that no man could have furnished that explanation at the time the first book of the Bible was written (or, indeed, at any time), or have given the complimentary comment upon it which we have received through the last of the inspired writers. This is not man; it is none other than the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and the Living One, who is and who was, and who is to come (Rev. i.).

But men *love* to be deceived. This is a

common trait of humanity; and what can account for this fact but the explanation that the race, in Adam, submitted voluntarily to the influence of the deceiver of the world? This *willingness* to be deceived is strikingly evinced by the readiness with which the natural man gives ear to all who teach the pleasing doctrine that existing conditions are in the main satisfactory, and, anyhow, are steadily improving. We are exhorted to listen to the throb of twentieth century activity and to keep in step with the march of progress. And if this be too materialistic for some, the same vague and meaningless sentiments are put into various religious settings; as in a New Year's greeting to his flock by an eminent divine, the central exhortation was to "bow before the sacred shrine of humanity." Will any reader be surprised to hear that there was a demand for, and a wide distribution of, this greeting? Such phrases as these, whereof every worldling, whether clerical or secular, has a goodly stock, possess an amazing power of deception, productive upon the natural mind of intellectual anæsthesia, and not to be accounted for save by the event recorded in the third of Genesis.

Other evidences of the present working and

widespread effects of this power of deception might be multiplied. We see it in the very general love of men for the improbable and unreal, and in the many ways in which human credulity manifests and gratifies itself; in the fondness for fiction, works of the imagination, romances, theatrical representations, so-called spiritualistic seances, feats of legerdemain, tales of occult happenings—in a word, anything and everything which represents unreality as reality or which aims to cheat the senses. Falsehood has thus a power even to entertain, to administer gratification, and to divert the mind, though it can never satisfy the heart of man; and when falsehood is presented in attractive forms and with practical skill, it is even exalted as “Art,” and to it high religious authorities attribute a beneficial influence; and it even finds its way into the churches.

Not such is the teaching of the Word of God. The man who is controlled thereby finds *his* delight in the law of the Lord. His enjoyment is not in “foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient,” but he talks of all “His wondrous works” (Ps. cv.). God’s words are in his heart, and he talks of them when he sits in his house, and when he walks by the

way, and when he lies down and when he rises up (Deut. vi. 6, 7). Over him the deceiver has no power, for having been enlightened by the Word of God, he is not ignorant of the deceptive devices of the enemy.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CONDITIONS OF FAITH.

**T**HE pursuit by the natural man of first one and then another of the many forms which unreality takes, and the willingness to be deceived, which the man himself recognizes even while he yields to it, is an evidence of his lost condition. Until he comes under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, man will avoid meeting the truth that he has lost fellowship with God. Yet his very willingness to hear of something improbable, and to invest it with attributes of reality, is a perpetual witness to the conscious lack of *something* which is outside all worldly experiences, which the world knows nothing of, and which the

natural man knows nothing of; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither *can he know them*, because they are SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The readiness of the mind of man to accord to falsehood that acceptance which, in a clear and unfallen mental state, would be accorded only to truth, may be seen in the prevalence throughout the whole world of idolatry, superstition, and false religion. The heathen world, embracing more than two-thirds of the living human beings, is completely under the sway of falsehood and darkness. But the so-called civilized peoples exhibit precisely the same tendencies. Religious, medical, and other quacks flourish in the centres of highest intelligence, and it is safe to say that no man is free from the inherited tendency to give heed and credence to the improbable and untrue.

And when men are not thus occupied, as were the Athenians, who "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing," they fall to the mental occupation of "exercising the imagination." Whatever that faculty may have been intended for, its

chief exercise in fallen man is to spin long skeins of falsehood, presenting to the mind a succession of unrealities and impossibilities in great variety. The fact that their character is known does not interrupt the process; and like the objective diversions in which men engage to "kill the time" while hastening on to eternity, these imaginations serve to crowd out all profitable subjects of meditation, and to exclude the knowledge of God. Therefore, the Apostle speaks of one phase of the Christian warfare as "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5).

There is a spiritual consequence which men bring upon themselves by having "received not the love of the truth"; and that consequence is the subject of our present consideration, namely, that they are always ready "to believe the lie," easily subject to "strong delusion," and exposed to all "signs and lying wonders," and to all "deceivableness and unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 9-11).

Such are the effects not only spread plainly in view on every hand, but within the common



experiences of every heart; effects of what? Is there any explanation, which even purports to account for these effects and to state the cause of them, save only the information given in the third of Genesis?

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### DIVINE AGENCIES IN THE WORLD.

**A**LTHOUGH the affairs of the world are at present in the control of Satan and are directed according to his policy; and although the time when the sovereignty of the world shall become the sovereignty of our God and of His Christ is yet in the future (Rev. xi. 15), there are, nevertheless, Divine agencies now acting *in* the world, and acting with almighty power to accomplish God's purpose for this age. Because of the presence of these Divine agencies the world is a very different affair from what it otherwise would be. The presence in it of even a small number of believers who truly

have the spirit and the testimony of God affects the character of the whole. Moreover, in all the unfoldings of human history, even while man has been permitted freely to choose his own way, God has, nevertheless, been overruling, has been steadily executing the counsels of His own will, and has been making even the wrath of men to praise Him. We have thus far, and for the sake of the clearer treatment of the subject, made but small reference to these Divine agencies. Let us now briefly consider them and learn what God is accomplishing through them during this present dispensation.

It has pleased God, for reasons which He has not revealed to His creatures, to permit the experiment upon which humanity entered in Eden to be worked out to its present stage, and to give full opportunity for a disclosure of the results of Satan's leadership. It has required many centuries for the working out of this experiment; but in God's sight these have been but as a few days, and when the end is reached He will be justified and every mouth will be stopped (Rom. iii. 19). But God has not abandoned His creature to be destroyed with his own experiment, but has always pro-

vided a way to return to Himself. This way has ever been accessible, and has been sought and used by those who have perceived the folly of sin and of continuing the vain attempt to make an abode of comfort and blessing in a Godless world.

During the age in which we live the Divine agencies in this world (which agencies while *in* it are in direct opposition to its projects, occupations and diversions, and particularly in opposition to its god and prince) are the Written Word and the Holy Spirit. The Word is given as the basis of faith—to the end that men may believe to the saving of their souls (John xx. 31). The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince men of the sin of unbelief, of the *righteousness* of Christ which is freely offered to all, and of the *judgment* of sin which He bore for all who accept Him (John xvi. 8; 1 Cor. i. 30; Rom. viii. 1). In so doing God is not converting the world (Scripture does not promise that such will be the result of preaching the Gospel), but is “taking out from the nations a people for His name” (Acts xv. 14).

This is the work of God in this age, clearly announced in the inspired Scriptures given at its beginning. Any one with the most ordi-

nary powers of observation can see for himself this work now going on, and though it be but one here and another there who is seen to turn from "the way of the world" and to seek the only true and "living way," the aggregate is "a great multitude which no man can number."

No explanation save that of Scripture can account for the world. No explanation save that of Scripture can account for the Church of Christ. If men would but apply in this case the same process of reasoning that they employ in other matters, and would accept the conclusions to which that process leads, the Scriptural explanation would, upon these facts alone, be accepted by all thoughtful persons. But the scientific man ceases to be scientific, and the philosopher ceases to be philosophical, and the rationalist ceases to be rational, just when he comes to these matters of highest importance. Here is another remarkable fact; and again we have no explanation of it save that given in Scripture. Why should this be so, were it not that the god of this world succeeds in blinding the minds of the unbelieving lest the light of the Gospel of Christ should dawn upon them? (2 Cor. iv. 4).

This, then, is the doctrine of Scripture—the command which Scripture gives to the believer is to live in the world as one who does not belong to it, as a stranger in it and a pilgrim through it, as a foreigner whose “citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. iii. 20, R.V.).

This command is to be received not merely as a pious sentiment, but as a living and governing principle—“Be ye separate.” And what else would one wish who recognizes the truth? Truth has ever a sanctifying (*i. e.*, separating) effect. Jesus prays for His followers, saying: “Sanctify them by Thy truth; *Thy Word* is truth” (John xvii. 17). If one believed the truth as declared by Jesus Christ he would desire, if but as a matter of expediency, to withdraw himself from, and to sever every tie connecting him with, the perishing order of things which is administered by Christ’s enemy. How much the more, if he knows, loves, trusts and waits for the Lord Jesus, will he wish to find no satisfaction, ease, comfort, or pleasure, in a system whose leaders cast Him out and crucified Him, and who would do the same to-day?

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE WAY OF DELIVERANCE.

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father.” (Gal. i. 4.)

THE foregoing picture of the world is one to fill the heart with awe and gloom; and well it might if this were *all* that Scripture revealed on this subject. We know now—that is, if we believe the Bible—how this vast organization came into existence, and who is its presiding genius. This information, however, is not *all* the truth which the Bible discloses concerning this earth, which was created to be man’s habitation. It is only the dark story of the past and present. But there is a future. While the world in its present condition is aptly described in Scripture as “this present darkness,” we are not left to grope our way through that darkness.

We are, indeed, in “a dark place,” but we have a light bright enough to guide us through it. “We have also a more sure word of pro-

phcey; whereunto ye *do well* that ye take heed in your hearts as unto *a light that shineth in a dark place*" (2 Pet. i. 19). We have, indeed, an enemy who is full of guile, but if we avail ourselves of our Bibles "we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. ii. 11).

Unfortunately for the whole world, this light of prophecy, given for the special purpose of guiding us through the present darkness, is sadly neglected by Christians, and we can safely infer to whose influence this neglect is due. The effects of the power of deception that are in the world are not by any means confined to the unbelievers. All human beings, so long as they are in "this present evil world," are to some extent under the influence of that power. The spiritually-blind man does not, upon conversion, receive clearness of vision, but is in a perturbed state wherein he "sees men as trees walking." The regenerated soul does not step out of gross darkness directly into the full light of truth. On the contrary, the path of the justified man is rather "as the light of dawn, which shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18 R.V. *marg.*). Hence, the general neglect by Christians of the "more sure word of prophecy."

Satan does not lose his interest in a man when he is converted to God. On the contrary, it is after the new nature is given that the conflict begins (Rom. vii). Not that the regenerated man can ever fall into Satan's hands again, for none of the Good Shepherd's flock shall *ever* perish, nor shall any be plucked out of His hand (John x. 28); but the influence of the Christian upon the unbelieving world can be limited. Hence, it is the desire of Satan to arrange compromises between the believer and the world, and so to occupy the time of the former with the affairs of the latter that he shall exert no influence for the saving of souls, and have no time for the study of the Word. Neglect of the Bible, *and particularly of prophecy*, thus directly serves Satan's purposes; whereas, all Scripture is profitable, and is given by God to the express end that the man of God should be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

Thus it is that, through the influence of the world upon all mankind, and particularly because of the ascendancy which the world has been steadily gaining in the nominal and professing church, the light of prophecy is neglected, and the above-quoted passage is



treated as if it read, "we have a very *uncertain* Word of prophecy, to which you do well to pay no attention whatever."

But *God's* people are waking up to the recognition of this neglect, and are beginning to realize the importance of studying that part of the Word which contains yet unfulfilled prophecy. This awakening is, indeed, one of the many and increasingly numerous signs which indicate the near approach of that long-expected time of the restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of *all* His holy prophets since the world began (Acts iii. 21).

We do not here enter upon the great range, extent, and detail, of "the more sure word of prophecy." It is enough for our present purposes to say that from Scripture we may learn that the joint enterprise of man and Devil will speedily be brought to an end; that the end will be destruction; that the *débris* of the world-system will be swept off the stage and consumed in the fires of judgment; that the powers of heaven shall be shaken and the inhabitants of earth be terribly afraid; that the same Jesus who from the Mount of Olives ascended into heaven shall so come again in

like manner as He went into heaven; that He will banish all sorrow, pain and fear, and will bring in everlasting righteousness; that nations shall come to His light and kings to the brightness of His rising; that the government shall be upon His shoulder, and of the increase of His Government and peace there shall be no end; that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; and that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.

Such is the word of prophecy; and it is "sure," because the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it, who also is faithful and will bring it to pass.

In the power and light of His sure Word of prophecy it is possible, nay, it is easy, to withdraw our affection from the world and from the things that are in the world. In that light we may view with perfect tranquillity the disintegration of all that is connected with this present visible order of things; for though "the world passeth away and the lust thereof," nevertheless we, who believe the word of God, "look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13).

In glancing backward over the subjects

touched upon in these pages the reader will observe that the prominent and universal traits and tendencies of human nature, and the most pronounced characteristics of human society have been traced to, and shown to be fully explained by, the record of the third chapter of Genesis. Rather we may say (inasmuch as Genesis has been aptly termed "the seed-plot of the Bible") that the few words contained in the first seven verses of that chapter are the seeds whereof all true descriptions of the human heart and of human society are the ripened harvest. Whence came words of such immense reach and compass that they give us, in this remote day, the only explanation of the origin of the world-system? From whom could they have come except from Him whose hand places in the tiny seed the germ of the mighty tree?

Is the account which we read in the third of Genesis true? If it were merely a matter of finding an hypothesis capable of standing awhile in the niche from which the Darwinian theory has been displaced, the question would not be worth the asking. Neither is it a matter of much consequence whether or not "the thought and culture of the age" adopt a

“theistic explanation” of the universe. To defend one theory or to attack another is not an object to which the writer would give any thought or attention. These pages are not written to gain the reader’s acceptance of a theory which may serve as a provisional resting-place for his mental speculations; but “these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye may have

LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.”

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